

A HISTORY OF THE LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I, MĀNOA

Early years

A librarian (Caroline Green), an atlas, a dictionary, and a 16-volume set of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, all of this housed in a 13 by 18 foot parlor of an old frame house: such was the beginning of the College of Hawaii Library, founded in 1908 to complement Hawai'i's newly organized land grant institution. By the end of 1908, the library collection had grown to 5,000 books and 7,000 pamphlets, mostly U.S. government agricultural publications sent on a deposit basis to all land grant institutions. A Hawaiiana focus began that same year when the library acquired the collection of antiquarian bookman Thomas Thrum. Early acquisition lists document a lengthy listing of gift books from Japan's Prince Akihito, thus establishing an emphasis on Asian materials that was to continue as an element of the library's mission. In 1912 the college moved to its present site in Mānoa Valley and the library to two rooms in what is now called Hawai'i Hall, a move accomplished by throwing books from an open window onto the bed of a truck.

Soon after 1920, when the College of Hawaii became the University of Hawaii, the first library building designed expressly for books opened. The new library's ground floor included staff offices and conference room arranged on three sides around a central stand-alone tower for books. The tower required a special foundation to hold the weight of steel frames and books. Book capacity was 100,000 volumes and the library seated 120 patrons. ROTC students supervised the move of books to the new facility. An official opening ceremony on March 19, 1925 was attended by Governor Farrington and members of the Territorial legislature. The building survives today as George Hall. Between 1929 and 1931 the library absorbed two large preexisting collections, those of the Federal Agricultural Experiment Station and the Territorial Normal and Training School. Elizabeth Bryan (1913-19), Clara Hemenway (1919-28), and Mary Pringle (1928-43) supervised library activities during this time. Of this group, Bryan is especially

remembered as an early feminist who waged and won a battle for recognition of the head librarian as a faculty member.

Early on the university was envisioned as an institution of higher learning that would connect the United States with Asia. Asian scholars, both faculty and students, were attracted to Hawai'i and found the island environment, with its many Oriental flavors, a comfortable place for research. The Oriental Institute, founded in 1936, became an important research faculty and further encouraged the development of strong Asian library collections. World War II brought an abrupt halt to these programs.

After the Pearl Harbor bombing, the grounds of the University were torn up for trenches and a site near the present-day Hamilton Library was readied as a mass burial ground for casualties anticipated in a Japanese invasion. At first the library appeared to be the university unit least affected by the war. The library had opened its doors as usual at 8 a.m. on Monday, 8 December 1941, but as the war wore on, the staff and student body were greatly affected. The military presence dominated the campus, and the library's Oriental and Pacific Islands collections became a resource for army and navy intelligence officials. Librarians were called upon, especially in the early years of the war, to help with fingerprinting, enumerating, and other defense work.

Near war's end in 1943, Pringle retired and was replaced by English Professor Carl Stroven (1943-66). Stroven's deep interest and scholarly command of Pacific Islands affairs established a new focus for the library that was to endure. In a 1983 article on the library, David Kittelson notes that University of Hawai'i President Gregg Sinclair characterized Stroven as "so hipped on the Pacific Islands that he felt the University should confine its efforts solely to the Pacific area in literature as well and anthropology and sociology." Stroven was the first of a devoted cadre of University of Hawai'i Pacific scholars who have supported the development of an outstanding Pacific Islands library collection.

Stroven led a drive to build a new library building, which was completed in 1956. Named for Gregg M. Sinclair, founder of the university's Oriental Institute and a former university president, the new quarters, spacious and open to Hawaiian trade winds, appealed to aesthetic senses but proved less successful as a shelter for books. Statehood for Hawai'i in 1959 ushered in a decade of unprecedented growth for the university and for the library, and from 1959 to 1961 the library budget had increased by 71 percent.

The Shaw Years

Working at prodigious speed, in three years Stroven's successor, Ralph Shaw (1966-69), transformed a respectable college library into a major research institution. In addition to serving as university librarian, Shaw founded the new Graduate School of Library Studies, transferred the library's professional staff from civil service to faculty status, upgraded civil service rankings for the library's support staff, saw the completion of a new "graduate research library," and supervised the reclassification of holdings from Dewey to the Library of Congress system. He handpicked faculty for the new library school, and in fact was to marry one of the new faculty members. Shaw had the reputation of being an efficiency expert. Though by no means unaware of the dawning computer revolution, he did not hesitate to decree that a new and expensive automated circulation system was inefficient, whereupon he tossed out the automated system and replaced it with a manual one. Under Shaw's energetic leadership and helped along by the bustling Hawai'i economy of the 1960s, the library budget more than doubled during his tenure. Adherents of the currently favored "participatory management style" would not have been happy with Shaw's administrative methods. When, for example, he decided to create a new science and technology unit, he hired three librarians and, unannounced, presented them to a new department head. Although he was controversial, the accomplishments of this dynamic library leader were enormous.

Ralph Shaw had an array of titles: dean of library activities, head of the Graduate School of Library Studies, graduate research librarian, and coordinator of library bibliographic activities. With his retirement, his responsibilities were divided and an independent library school established. Stanley West (1968-77) and Donald Bosseau (1977-82) served as university librarians during the militant days of the late 1960s and 1970s. Both contributed to preparation for conversion of library operations to online services.

With the move to Hamilton Library, first called the “graduate research library,” Sinclair was designated an undergraduate library. A library staff empathetic to the special needs of younger students presided over a highly selected collection geared to the undergraduate curriculum. The undergraduate library concept was abandoned in 1993, giving way to conversion of Sinclair Library to a music and media center. The graduate research library, renamed in honor of a former university president, adopted the more welcoming title of Hamilton Library and became home to all other major collections.

Automation History

With respect to automation, the library followed conventional trends: conversion of the card catalog to machine readable form, the creation of a microfiche catalog, and shared online cataloging made possible by membership in the online bibliographic service OCLC. In local style, a kahuna chanted in Hawaiian to bless a new bank of OCLC terminals. The next step was the choice of an online library system vendor. The library took the somewhat daring step in 1984 of selecting the ALOHA system, becoming that company’s first customer. An integrated online public access, circulation, and cataloging system designed expressly for the University of Hawai’i, ALOHA was regarded by library staff as a princely operation. Problems arose however, and eventually ALOHA was sold to a larger system vendor, GEAC. The library looked elsewhere, some of the system librarians vowing that never again would the library serve as a beta site.

Next the library transferred to the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries (CARL), which offered automated serials control, a new generation of hardware, and online access to off-site library catalogs and external databases. UHCARL, as the local system became known, served as a host site for a state network of libraries, including nine external library sites in the University of Hawai'i system, the Hawaii Medical Library, and the Bishop Museum. The association with CARL lasted until 2000. CARL customers included a mix of public and academic libraries. That feature of the system took a toll on Hawai'i's academic-oriented library staff in terms of frustrated efforts to move ahead with needed services, differing due dates for different patron types, for example.

International concerns over the dire record-keeping implications of Y2K have now been largely forgotten, but were very real as the year 2000 approached. UH librarians recall that Y2K concern was a significant factor in the selection of Endeavor Voyager as the library's next system. Endeavor made assurances that they had solved Y2K issues. Moreover, Endeavor Voyager has a strong customer base of research libraries, a Web-based catalog environment and strong cataloging, circulation, and acquisition modules, with promises of an image service and client server modules on the way. Patrons, increasingly technologically sophisticated, adjusted to these behind-the-scenes changes with little apparent difficulty.

Special Strengths and Special Challenges

The library's areas of concentration correspond to the university's particular strengths. The Asia collections assembled prior to World War II were later boosted by the support needs of the federally funded East West Center, located on the grounds of the University of Hawai'i. There was considerable wrangling over whether the library's former Oriental Institute library holdings should be housed at the East West Center or remain at Hamilton Library. Library annals record an infamous "midnight raid" when East West Center personnel pulled up a

truck to the back of Hamilton and spirited off the Oriental Institute collection to the new Center. Later when the Center's library was reconfigured as specific support collections for the Center's various institutes, the Oriental Collection returned to the university library.

The library maintains membership in five Asia-centered American academic consortia, is one of a handful of University participants in the Library of Congress Asian Cooperative Acquisition Programs for South and Southeast Asia, and has established cooperative links with the Global ILL Framework, Japan, and Beijing University, China, among others. Since the 1930s, the library has collected materials in Russian, European, and Asian languages pertaining to Siberia, the Russian Far East, and Russian relations with Asia and the Pacific. Cataloging of the collection's Chinese, Japanese, and Korean original language materials in their corresponding Asian scripts has long posed a challenge, but is now a reality.

Similarly, the Pacific Islands collection benefited by the establishment of the university's unique Pacific Islands Study Program and a team of University of Hawai'i Pacific Islands scholars dedicated to developing library resources in their areas. The Hawaiian collection is unequalled in the world. In collecting and preserving materials relating to native Hawaiian language, culture, and history, the library serves as a resource for the ongoing native Hawaiian cultural renaissance. The curator of the Hawaiian collection routinely conducts library instruction sessions in Hawaiian, a language once thought doomed for extinction, but currently alive and healthy. The library's doors are open to the Hawai'i community and visiting scholars, and collections documenting Hawai'i's multi-cultural heritage are heavily used. In the sciences, the library has built outstanding collections on tropical agriculture, ocean sciences, and marine biology.

At the urging of a concerned group of the teaching faculty, in 1987 University Librarian John Haak moved to establish a new archives and manuscripts unit. Aside from the heavily-used Hawaii War Records Depository given to the University after World War II, previously the University archives had been treated, unsatisfactorily so, as book materials and integrated into the Hawaiian Collection. A professional University Archivist was appointed and the newly-invigorated unit grew rapidly to include Hawaii Congressional papers. The first of these collections was the Sen. Spark M. Matsunaga papers, followed by gifts of the Sen. Hiram Fong and Rep. Thomas P. Gill. Other significant archival collections added were the Plantation Archives formerly held by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (housed with the library's Hawaiian collection) and the Japanese American Veterans Collection.

A related archival collection, the Jean Charlot Collection, came to the library in 1982 as a bequest, then valued at over a million dollars. This collection is a major archive of documents and art work relating to the artist and writer Jean Charlot and to those with whom he came in contact over the course of his career in France, Mexico, and Hawai'i. The collection's strong emphasis on 20th century Mexican art history has diversified the research strengths of the library and attracted international scholarly attention.

A major 2005 exhibition, "Making Connections: Treasures from the University of Hawai'i Library" organized by University of Hawai'i Art Gallery Director Tom Klobe, was a showcase for some 350 items. As Klobe put it, spectacular as were the rare books, the historical documents and photographs, the letters written by Hawai'i's monarchs, the poignant messages from AJA servicemen during World War II, the journals, the prints, the drawings, the maps, the posters, and the fine examples of book design, these items could only hint at the wealth of resources accumulated by the library during its 100 years of collecting.

In Hawai'i's tropical climate, mold and a thriving array of insects seriously threaten library collections. When environmental safety concerns led to the closing of an in-house fumigation chamber, the library's preservation department converted a large ocean-transport container into a freezer, and thousands of volumes have received the deep-freeze treatment. A pest control team stays on the alert to combat outbreaks of mold and infestation.

The Hawaiian Islands are among the world's most isolated population centers. Islanders remember a time when mainland television programs were broadcast weeks after the initial airing; the library's book deliveries were similarly slow. One of the goals of John Haak (1983-2000), successor to Don Bosseau as university librarian, was an improved book delivery schedule. When Haak began his tenure, the average elapsed time between the ordering of a book and its appearance on the shelves was one year. The use of airfreight together with automated cataloging meant that patrons could often expect to find a title on the shelves by the time the first reviews appeared.

As a state-supported institution, the university library is highly vulnerable to fluctuations in the state's economy. Beginning in 1995, one of the worst downturns occurred as the sugar and pineapple industries collapsed and a Japanese-Hawai'i investment bubble burst. University Librarian John Haak led the staff through the resulting financial crisis, the worst in the library's history. To protest cuts in library hours and reduced book budgets, students marched to the legislature and staged a sleep-in at the library. The library turned to technological advances for alternate avenues to access other than ownership. An improved interlibrary loan service helped, as did a subsidized electronic journal article delivery service. So successful, in fact, was the electronic document delivery program that library staff members were on occasion forced to explain and justify why a library still needed printed sources in addition to those in electronic form. In the end it was the good will of the library public as well as renewed support by university officials that brought about a gradual recovery from the budget crisis.

Construction of a long-delayed third wing of Hamilton library and a renovation program began in 1998, shortly before Haak retired.

Hawai'i's governmental climate, with its intricate layers of politicized bureaucracy and strong unions, calls for adroit strategies on the part of library managers. During state legislative sessions, the university librarian maintains an active presence at the state capitol, lobbying for funds and new programs. A welcome trend of the late 1990s was the granting of autonomy to the university library. In theory, this meant freedom to manage internal budgetary and administrative affairs without undue external interference.

Following John Haak's 2000 retirement, Jean Ehrhorn served as Interim Dean until Diane Perushek's appointment as dean in late 2001. On the evening of October 30, 2004, the library faced a disaster. A swollen, muddy Mānoa Stream burst through the ground floor of Hamilton Library. Several library school students escaped the rising waters through a window. Morning light revealed the extent of the devastation. Hardest hit were the government documents and maps collections. The building of the government documents collection dated back to 1907; of the some two million items, about 95% were damaged or lost. Similarly, 65% of the maps and aerial photographs were destroyed. Tens of thousands of mud-covered maps had to be painstakingly cleaned by hand over a period of years. The ground floor also housed collection services; an estimated 36,000 items awaiting processing were lost. Furniture and computers were destroyed. The library's electrical system was destroyed, necessitating emergency generator power for many months. Total monetary damage estimates continue to rise and may reach 48 million dollars. The library's state-of-the-art preservation unit moved quickly to transfer selected items to rented Matson freezer containers until they could be cleaned and restored. Two Texas corporations, the Belfor document recovery company and the BMS CAT company were contracted. BMS CAT personnel were on-site for many months to dehumidify, clean, and strip bare the ground floor. Reconstruction of the ground floor may be complete in 2009.

More than one librarian remarked that the remainder of a career would have to be devoted to flood recovery work.

A century has gone by since the library's founding. Caroline Green's encyclopedia set has expanded to a collection nearing the three and a half million volume count. A staff of one now numbers around 160. The library has met the challenge of the electronic knowledge revolution and survived a major natural disaster. It continues as a unit central to the educational mission of the university.

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